

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN NINETY-FIVE

SPRING, 1966

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS WH

It hardly seems possible when I think of it, but the Thoreau Society will this summer mark its silver anniversary and I will have completed twenty-five years as secretary. It might be worthwhile therefore to reminisce a bit about the history of the society because strangers and new members often ask how it got started.

Just before World War II and just after I graduated from college, I spent two years teaching in a small town in western Massachusetts. Already madly enthusiastic about Thoreau, I found no one in the town who shared my interest and so I began to write to anyone I could find who was interested in Thoreau. The letters I received in return were so interesting that I began to suggest that a society should be established based on a general interest in Thoreau. My suggestions at first received little response. Even as ardent a Thoreauvian as Raymond Adams of Chapel Hill replied that there simply weren't enough people interested in Thoreau to justify a society. I was about to give up when I by chance wrote to Rev. Roland D. Sawyer of Ware, Mass., then a member of the Massachusetts state legislature. He replied that he had long contemplated establishing an annual pilgrimage to Walden Pond on Thoreau's birthday and suggested we combine our efforts--if I would help him organize such a pilgrimage, I could suggest to the people there and then gathered together that we establish a society.

Together we wrote to Allen French of Concord for support and he generously offered to act as local host for such a meeting. At a preliminary meeting in Concord we mapped out plans for a meeting to be held at the Walden cairn on the morning of July 12, 1941. Announcements were sent out broadcast to the news media and to a list of fifty or sixty Thoreau enthusiasts that Raymond Adams provided us with. We hoped that perhaps thirty or forty people might show up, but only a few days before the meeting Allen French called me to say that they had received definite word of not more than five or six people coming from out of town.

On the morning of the 12th Roland Sawyer and I drove up to Walden Pond in a driving rainstorm to find a thoroughly drenched boy scout who told us the meeting had been transferred to a D.A.R. Hall on Lexington Road. When we reached there, we were astounded to find the hall bursting at the seams--more than a hundred people were present. There is no need now to go into all the details of that first meeting--suffice it to say that everyone agreed it was a rousing success. I introduced my proposal for

IF THIS PARAGRAPH IS MARKED WITH RED, YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE THOREAU SOCIETY EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE. RENEWAL IS \$2.00 A YEAR. IF YOU WISH THE CONVENIENCE, YOU MAY RENEW FOR ANY NUMBER OF YEARS AT THE SAME TIME. LIFE MEMBERSHIP IS \$25.00. All memberships and renewals should be sent to the secretary, Walter Harding, State University College, Geneseo, New York.

the establishment of a society. It was immediately agreed upon. Raymond Adams was elected president, Fred S. Piper of Lexington was chosen vice-president, and I, secretary-treasurer. It was agreed to hold an annual meeting in Concord on the Saturday nearest Thoreau's birthday and that in between times, we would communicate through a newsletter. That fall I spent doing graduate work in Chapel Hill under Prof. Adams and together we got out the first bulletin, a two-page mimeographed affair, and by this time our mailing list had already grown to nearly 150.

With the exception of a break in the war years, the society has met annually ever since in Concord with attendance often going above the three-hundred point. Again with the exception of a break in the war years, the bulletin has appeared quarterly ever since and now is mailed out to more than seven hundred members spread over virtually every state in the Union and to foreign countries on six continents. A booklet series was established in 1942 and it has now reached No. 21. Files of the Thoreau Society publications are kept in major libraries both across the country and abroad.

For the sake of the record, it might be well in this anniversary number to list the officers of the society over the years:

PRESIDENTS

Raymond Adams, 1941-1955
Herbert Faulkner West, 1955-1956
Howard Zahniser, 1956-1957
Edwin Way Teale, 1957-1958
J. Lyndon Shanley, 1958-1959
Paul Oehser, 1959-1960
Carl Bode, 1960-1961
Lewis Leary, 1961-1962
T.L. Bailey, 1962-1963
Walter Harding, 1963-1964
Roland Robbins, 1964-1965
Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, 1965-1966

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Fred S. Piper, 1941-1944
Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, 1944-1955
Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, 1955-1965
Robert Needham, 1965-1966

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Walter Harding, 1941-1966

ACTING SECRETARY-TREASURER

T. Morris Longstreth, 1942-1944

THE 1966 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1966 annual meeting will be held on Saturday, July 9th, in the First Parish Church in Con-

cord. A coffee hour will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the Ladies Parlor. The business meeting will be held in the sanctuary at 10:30 and will be followed by Mrs. Hosmer's presidential address on "The Resident Amateur" and a paper by Prof. Raymond Adams. A catered buffet luncheon will be served in the vestry. Tickets will be \$2.00. (Those wishing to assure themselves of tickets may send advance reservations to Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, 22 Elm Street, Concord, Mass.) In the afternoon Mrs. Edmund Fenn will conduct a guided tour of the new Estabrook Woods that is now preserving "forever wild" one of Thoreau's favorite bits of the Concord country. At the evening session slides of the new preserve will be shown.

CONCORD WOODS AND FIELDS by Mary R. Fenn

One of the questions asked over and over again is, whether there is any open land in Concord left. Of course what they mean is, are there any walks through the woods which have remained essentially the way they looked in Thoreau's day. The answer is; yes, there are. In spite of the population explosion and the fact that Concord, like any other community, has growing pains it is remarkable how many favorite trips one can still follow, and find the same lovely views, the same interesting terrain, and even the same wild flowers growing in the very places where Thoreau described them in his Journals.

Second Division, so-called because it was the second division of land among the new settlers coming into town, has a new Junior High School going up in its abandoned fields, and on each end of the old Marlboro Road new houses creep slowly into the area. Yet, there is still the beautiful Second Division Spring coming out from under a sandy banking, with wild azalia, iris, and marsh marigold growing along the sandy bottomed brook as it meanders down through the woods. Later in the season the beautiful purple fringed orchis can be found as well. One may follow the course of the brook and cross the old Powder Mill Road, where great wagons from the mill in Maynard came through Concord on their way to Boston. Most of the road is inaccessible to autos, fortunately, so that arbutus has spread along the banking, Christmas ferns fill the gullies, and even a tuft of closed gentian grows right in the center of the road. If one continues along a wisp of a woodpath, the woods give way to open fields, blue in season with birds-foot violets, and bordered on sandy bankings with wild pinks, among which, year after year, can be found a pure white albino. At last the path turns into a woodroad, and there is the Indian Mortar gouldged out of a huge rock, so large that it cannot be moved, and so has remained safe, so far. Back on the old Marlboro Road, one may continue clear through to Sudbury, and pass the Maynard House set among huge trees and rolling fields, a place so well kept and beautiful that Thoreau spoke of it as a terrestrial paradise.

Another area in Concord, familiar to anyone who has read the Journals, is Esterbrook Country, that great wild area which runs through woods clear to Carlisle. This is great Thoreau country, and again, accessible only on foot. We pass the home of Brooks Clark, "that cheery old man enjoying his declining years", whom Thoreau often met in these woods. Then there is the stonework foundation of the ancient lime kiln, which Brooks Clark told Thoreau he remembered in operation sixty-five years before. Owl's Nest Swamp is opposite..a great tract of spongy bogland

with trees growing in it, so hushed and beautiful, and surely much as it must have been over 100 years ago. At the farther end, on the sloping ground is Indian Rock, that huge glacial boulder, under whose overhanging ledge, Thoreau said, the Indians had their encampment. Lichens still grow on the rock as in his day. Just beyond is the line of small lime quarries, with columbine, saxifrage, and the small ferns growing in its ledges, while the ground above is covered with partridge berries, pyrola, and small bush blueberries. Still farther along is Boulder Field, and then the cellar hole of the Esterbrook House which was a cellar hole even in Thoreau's day; but the foundation stones are still straight and firm, and lilac bushes still grow at the dooryard.

Paralleling the Esterbrook Road is Punketasset with its wood path known as Two-Rod Road, running also through to Carlisle. Here is the little brook which tumbles down a rocky bed from the old earthen dam and mill pond, both of which are plainly discernable today. Here also is the stone foundation of the mill where cedar wood was cut for the Thoreau pencils. Bloodroot covers the steep hillside back of the millsite, and Herb Robert clings to the foundation stones, but the walker must be wary for poison ivy has taken over.

Fairhaven is still beautifully unspoiled, with the view from the cliffs as lovely if not as panoramic as in Thoreau's day, for the meadows and pastures bordering the Sudbury River and Fairhaven Bay far below have grown up to woods.

But Well Meadow is still there, and the interesting Andromeda Ponds, so-called because in many of them the andromeda (which we now call Cassandra) grows in standing water, while yellow bladderwort, which Thoreau described as a "sluttish woman in a gaudy yellow bonnet" floats on the surface of the brackish water. Lady slippers are profuse in the dry woods and ferns are lush in the swampy places, while the beautiful Rhodora still can be found sending out its lavender blossoms in early spring.

Back of Walden Pond, a short distance from the State Park with its throngs of bathers and picnickers, is Heywood's Meadow, a wild and lonely place, where Thoreau went to pick cranberries. A brook meanders through the spongy peat, making a pond of sorts at the lower end where white waterlilies grow. If you are there at the right time, you will find the sphagnum floor of the bog covered with white cotton grass and hundreds of delicate pink Rose Pogonia. Half way up the slope at the upper end is a good-sized spring known as Emerson's spring for it was on his land, which helps feed the meadow along with underground springs, for a meadow in Thoreau's day was a very wet place where in mid-summer the lush grass might be cut.

A few fringed gentians still grow in Concord, back in the wet meadows behind his birthplace, and along Spenser Brook, but they do best in wet pockets in a hayfield where the mowers have cut away the bushes and tall grass which otherwise chokes them out.

Perhaps the most exciting wild flower which still grows in Concord and is associated with Henry Thoreau is the white fringed polygala which he discovered growing at the edge of the Ministerial Swamp. This plant has grown and spread until it covers a couple of acres. The polygalas were nearly lost a year or two ago, when a contractor from out of town bought the land there for a house-

ing development. But wild-flower lovers, conservationists, and Thorevians sprang into action, and the result was that by exchanging lots and rearranging zoning, the main patch was saved. It is remarkable and heartwarming, that the citizens of a modern town would vote intown meeting to preserve a patch of humble little wildflowers.

Yes indeed, in spite of alarms and excursions, particularly by contractors who look upon Concord's beautiful woodlands only with an eye to exploiting it for their own financial gain; and with a great deal of hard work and vigilance on the part of those of us who cherish these hallowed spots, most of them have so far been preserved.

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Another iconoclast was George White, a bill collector for the Subscription Book department, who had lived in Concord as a boy and had known Thoreau. "Why it makes me ashamed," he said, "to collect money from anyone fool enough to buy that man's books. Henry Thoreau was no good. He was just a loafer who never did an honest day's work in his whole life. No one in Concord had any use for him, except maybe Mr. Emerson, and he was a little cracked."

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- We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: H. Adel, R. Adams, T. Bailey, D. Bernstein, A. Bell, H. Christman, M. Campbell, J. Donovan, H. Dexter, R. Epler, R. Ganley, P. Hebert, G. Hosmer, L. Hoffman, R. Hull, D. Kamen-Kaye, A. Kovar, A. Lowmes, N. Lehrman, V. Munoz, P. Meigs, F. McGill, P. Oehser, E. Perry, E. Smith, R. Story, R. Schaedle, W. Sutton, W. White, P. Williams, A. Weitkamp, R. Wheeler, and E. Zeitlin. Please keep the secretary informed of additions to the Thoreau bibliography.
- BACK ISSUES
- The following back issues of the THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN are available from the secretary for 50¢ each: 12, 13, 15, 21-63, 65, 66, 69, 70, 72-83, 85-94. Bulletins 1-9 are reprinted together as a pamphlet, 50¢. Booklets 3, 5, 8, 10 and 14 are available at 50¢ each; Booklets 6, 7, 9, 16, 19 and 20 at \$1.00 each. To even up supplies, the secretary will sell five bulletins of his selection for \$1.00, ten for \$2.00, fifteen for \$3.00, or twenty for \$4.00. The secretary also has available 5" x 7" glossies of the Rowse crayon, the Maxham daguerreotype, the Dunshee ambrotype, and the Ricketson caricature of Thoreau for fifty cents each.
- The following are now life members of the Thoreau Society: Clyde Herr, Harrisonburg, Va.; Prof. Ethel Seybold, Jacksonville, Ill.; Mrs. Herbert Zeitlin, Elmwood Park, Ill.; Hermes Ross Berlin, Watertown, Mass.; Mrs. Parker Montgomery, Westwood, Mass.; David Montgomery, Granville, Ohio. Life memberships are \$25.00.
- AN INCOHERENT SENTENCE IN WALDEN by Raymond D. Gozzi
- As writer, Thoreau purposely sought extravagance at times and this not infrequently has caused readers to misunderstand him. But in at least one place in Walden, Thoreau may be charged with producing a sentence that does not stick together as a sentence -- that is, in short, incoherent.



This sentence, which may be found in any edition of Walden in the third paragraph before the end of "The Bean-Field" chapter, reads:

we would not deal with a man thus plodding
ever, leaning on a hoe or a spade between
his work, not as a mushroom, but partially
risen out of the earth, something more than
erect, like swallows alighted and walking on
the ground:--

"And as he spake, his wings would now and
then
Spread, as he meant to fly, then close
again,--

so that we should suspect we might be con-
versing with an angel.

In reading this sentence, we may stumble initially over the phrase "not as a mushroom"; but we can recover balance quickly when we realize his meaning is, "we would not deal with a man as a mushroom." We stumble again, however, and this time much more seriously, when we come to "something more than erect." This phrase seems to be referring to "mushroom." Only when we complete the sentence and look back do we realize that Thoreau's meaning would have been clearly conveyed if he had written something like this: "...not as a mushroom, but partially risen out of the earth; rather we would deal with him as something more than erect, like swallows alighted and walking on the ground...."

Thoreau was being excessively elliptical here, and thus his sentence became incoherent.
University of Massachusetts

THOREAU'S DICTION by Robert H. Woodward

In "A Caveat for Journalists" (Word Study, December, 1963, p. 7) Professor Jack E. Fink cites an example from Walden to show that Thoreau was guilty of "the current vice of adding wise to nouns (money-wise, defensewise, etc.) in order to conserve space" He quotes from a passage in "Economy" in which Thoreau describes some of the activities that he has cherished: "... waiting at evening on the hill-tops for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, and that, manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun."

In defense of Thoreau, who picked his words with care, it should be noted that Thoreau's use of wise as a suffix is an accepted locution, meaning like or in a manner characteristic of the word to which it is suffixed, as in clockwise. The current offensive use of wise means with respect to, about, or in the area of. Thoreau's manna-wise means merely like manna.

Since the new usage of wise seems to be primarily journalese, it is coincidentally interesting that in the sentence following the allusion to manna Thoreau states, "For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions...." Professor Fink interprets this statement literally and sees Thoreau's supposed experience as a reporter "the source from which he contracted this verbal infection." Although Thoreau once acted as a reporter for the Yeoman's Gazette (as Kenneth Walter Cameron has pointed out in the Emerson Society Quarterly, No. 5 [1956]. 9), his reportorial duties do not warrant his being called a journalist in the newspaper sense. In The Variorum Walden (note 47 to Chapter I), Professor Walter Harding convincingly interprets this statement as a facetious reference

to Thoreau's own journals, or perhaps to the Dial, whose editors rejected a number of Thoreau's contributions.

San Jose (Calif.) State College

"THE RIVALS" AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE FOR WALDEN

It is well known that Thoreau cared little for eighteenth-century English literature, yet he may have borrowed from it in a heretofore unremarked passage in Walden. While his sizable library included only one volume each by Goldsmith, Sterne, Burns, and Cowper, and though his withdrawals from the Harvard, Boston Public, and Concord libraries included no English plays at all, Thoreau owned a two-volume anthology of The British Drama which included "The Rivals."

Whether there or elsewhere, that he had read at least the first act of Sheridan's decidedly untranscendental comedy seems fairly likely in view of the fact that a telling phrase from the play (1775) appears virtually unchanged in Walden. In "The Rivals" (I, ii), Julia is grateful to her fiancé for having pulled her out of the river. Even if she had not loved him before, she says, the rescue "were an obligation sufficient." But her cousin Lydia scoffs: "Obligation!--why, a water spaniel would have done as much!"

Something remarkably like this appears in the eight paragraph from the end of "Economy." There Thoreau denies any sense of obligation to would-be rescuers and do-gooders: "A man is not a good man to me because he will. . . pull me out of a ditch if I should ever fall into one. I can find you a Newfoundland dog that will do as much."

Unlike Lydia Languish, Thoreau picks a giant North American breed.

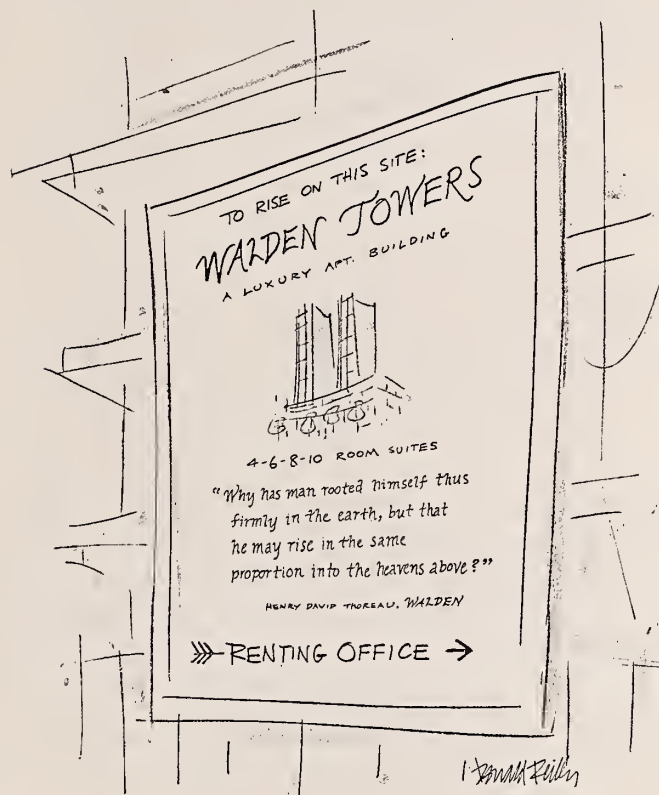
THOREAU SOCIETY BOOK EXCHANGE

This non-profit exchange can be a real service to members, as those who search the bookshops in vain can attest. Help your fellow members and yourself by freely listing your wants and surpluses. Limit inquiries to items of specific Thoreau interest. Give adequate description, including condition and price, if you have one. Send queries to Kenneth Harber, 70 Lanark Crescent, Rochester, N.Y. 14609.

WANTED - Bode, PORTABLE THOREAU, 1964 and Harding, MAN OF CONCORD (Spanish Language items offered in exchange for these); Channing, THOREAU, THE POET-NATURALIST, Boston 1873; Mathieson, ISLAND IN THE SAND, Bobbs-Merrill 1964; Miller, CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONCORD; Salt, LIFE OF HDT, London 1896; Sanborn, LIFE OF HDT, Boston 1917; Stowell, THOREAU GAZETTEER; Thoreau, WALDEN, Armed Forces Edition; Thoreau, WRITINGS, volumes 7 and 18 of the Walden Edition, 1906, preferably in blue cloth binding, needed to complete a set; Thomas, W.S., EMERSON AND THOREAU: A RELATIONSHIP, mimeographed booklet, Rochester 1954; Thoreau, WORKS, Crowell, 1940, one volume anthology; Thoreau, CAPE COD, Crowell, 1907, introduction by Annie Russell Marble; Thoreau, CAPE COD, Samson Low, London, 1865; Thoreau, WALDEN, Riverside Pocket Edition, Boston 1915, soft tan leather binding, needed to complete a set; Thoreau, WRITINGS, large paper Riverside Edition, Boston 1894.

FOR SALE - Allen (ed.), Thoreau, NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND BIRDS, 1910, very good \$4; Atkinson,

TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS, Random House, first printing, new, \$2.50; Chase, *THE LOVELY AMBITION*, Norton, 1960, first edition, new \$2.50; Kleinfeld, *A THOREAU CHRONOLOGY*, new \$2; Porter, Gene Stratton *THE HARVESTER*, Grosset & Dunlap 1916, reference to HDT in dedication; Sherlock, *HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS*. Des Moines, contains "Walden, the Rendezvous of Thoreau"; Teale, *AUTUMN ACROSS AMERICA*, Dodd-Mead 1961, new \$4.



Drawing by Donald Reilly; c 1965 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. From the *New Yorker* for Nov. 13, 1965.

THOREAU SOCIETY OF JAPAN. . . .

A Thoreau Society of Japan has recently been established. The first meeting was held in Tokyo on October 22, 1965. Prof. M. Higashiyama was elected president; Mr. G. Saito, vice president; Prof. T. Yamasaki, secretary for the Kansai District, and Prof. K. Kasegawa, secretary for the Kanto District. The Kansai District chapter held a meeting on Nov. 27th at Takarazuka at which Prof. Higashiyama read a paper on "The Love Affairs of Henry David Thoreau." One of Prof. Kasegawa's students at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, Miss Tamiko Seike, has recently submitted a B.Lit. thesis on Thoreau entitled "Thoreau's Life at Walden and Nature."

AN UNNOTICED REVIEW OF THOREAU'S WEEK . . .

We are indebted to Mr. James Greaves for calling the following hitherto unnoticed review of Thoreau's WEEK to our attention. It is from the Oct. 13, 1849 issue of the *LONDON SPECTATOR* (XXII, 975):

"This volume is an American importation. The Concord and Merrimack are two rivers of New Hampshire

and Massachusetts. The title of the book would have led one to expect an agreeable series of excursions incidents and descriptions of landscape in a half-reclaimed state. There is something though not much of these two subjects, but neither of them done in a very lively or attractive way. The bulk of the book consists of Mr. Thoreau's reveries, that might have been written anywhere: they are rather flat and not of a kind to interest."



"You and the simple life of Thoreau!"

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JOTTINGS

There seem to be pretty good indications that the United States Post Office Department will issue a stamp next year to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's birth.

Several years ago Thoreau Society member S.T. Wellman of Cleveland, Ohio, donated bronze markers for a number of Thoreau sites in Concord. When the marker at the Concord jail site was stolen last year, he generously donated a replacement and it has now been installed.

Mr. Leonard Kleinfeld (9526 67th Ave., Forest Hills, N.Y.) has volunteered to forward to foreign Thoreau scholars in Japan, France, and England any volumes by or pertaining to Thoreau sent along to him.

A few members of the the society, apparently not aware that they were receiving The Thoreau Centennial free as part of their annual membership, asked that their copies be returned by the post office! If they are still interested in having a copy, they should notify the secretary and he will mail them one.

Miss Malvina Hoffman (157 East 35th St., New York City 16) has asked us to announce that the price of the 10" reproduction of her bust of Thoreau has been raised from \$25 to \$250.

Prof. Norman Foerster of Los Altos, Calif., has recently presented to the Thoreau Society Archives a diary which he kept in 1909 when he was a student at Harvard which gives many comments about Walden Pond, Thoreau, and the bird life in the area.

Gift shops are now featuring a "quill, book and candle lamp inspired by articles on the desk of Thoreau" produced by the Ethan Allen Co. The price is \$79.50—more than two and a half times the cost of Thoreau's entire cabin.

The University of Massachusetts at Amherst has recently named a new dormitory for Henry David Thoreau.

